

Ad Firm Sues Wild World Over Bills

By Michel McQueen
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A Baltimore advertising firm has filed a lawsuit against the Wild World amusement park in Largo, charging the 2-year-old park has failed to pay about a half million dollars in advertising bills.

Smith, Burke and Azzam Advertising sued the park in Prince George's Circuit Court, first asking for \$752,609.83 in unpaid agency fees, production and media costs.

Attorney James B. Astrachan, a lawyer for the agency, said yesterday that Wild World has paid his clients about \$250,000 since the suit was filed Sept. 14 and he will amend the suit to reflect the payment.

V. Paul Zanecki, a part-owner of Wild World and also one of its lawyers, said Wild World owes about \$393,000 to the advertising agency, "according to their records." He declined to say whether Wild World would pay the money. "That will be determined in the courtroom. It may wind up that they owe us money."

"What we're thinking of also is filing a countersuit for gross incompe-

See WILD WORLD, D9, Col. 5

Advertising Firm Sues Wild World

WILD WORLD, From D8

tence," said Zanecki. He acknowledged making the recent \$250,000 payment but declined to comment further.

Wild World recently fired its general manager, laid off a number of its employees and announced it is closing the "safari park" portion of the facility and disposing of its wild animals. The park resolved another lawsuit with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus over the fate of

eight Asian elephants, agreeing to care for them for 45 more days.

Named as defendants in the latest lawsuit are Wild World owners Stuart A. Bernstein, a real estate investor and developer; Richard S. Cohen, a Washington developer; John J. Mason, vice chairman of NS&T bank in Washington, and Zanecki.

"We tried to avoid filing suit, [but] as promised dates for payment came and went, we as lawyers became very concerned," Astrachan said.